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14. ABSTRACT If sequestration is implemented and the DOD faces additional cuts in the upcoming years it will be devastated at an unprecedented level largely due to the nature of the world today. The budget deficit has never been larger but the world has never been more chaotic and in need of properly trained and equipped service members who are world-wide deployable and able to respond to a litany of problems. Further cuts would limit the ability of the military to engage in more than one contest as well as the ability for these forces to engage in a protracted engagement from an execution or sustainment standpoint. Sequestration would prevent further procurement and would limit innovation for equipment that is either outdated or too heavy for all operating environments. The worldwide reach called for in the NSS and NMS will need to be modified to reflect the operational capability of a reduced force. While this process has been repeated in a similar fashion throughout the modern age, the key difference the US currently faces is that there is not a singular threat but rather a mix of possible state and non-state actors capable of operating in various forms of warfare.					
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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

Reducing the Footprint: Post Combat Operations, Budget Cuts, and Modern Day Sequestration

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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Executive Summary

Title: Reducing the Footprint: Post Combat Operations, Budget Cuts, and Modern Day Sequestration

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Thesis: If sequestration is executed, with all second and third order effects associated in consideration, the US military will not be able to maintain an operational capability to execute all required mission sets and adequately defend the nation to threats without a change to the national security strategy.

Discussion: After every major combat operation since World War II the US has reduced its military size and associated funding in order to maintain armed forces deemed equivalent to the strategic threat. Various social and political underpinnings, with fiscal concerns constituting the main tenant, have shaped this course of action. The US military is negatively affected by this process and the sum of this action is the nation is left further in debt and unprepared for the next war. If sequestration is implemented and the DOD faces additional cuts in the upcoming years it will be devastated at an unprecedented level largely due to the nature of the world today. The budget deficit has never been larger but the world has never been more chaotic and in need of properly trained and equipped service members who are world-wide deployable and able to respond to a litany of problems. Further cuts to manpower, procurement, and readiness would limit the ability of the military to engage in more than one contest as well as the ability for these forces to engage in a protracted engagement from an execution or sustainment standpoint. Sequestration would prevent further procurement that would limit innovation and replace equipment that is either outdated or too heavy for all operating environments. The worldwide reach called for in the National Security Strategy would need to be modified to reflect the operational capability of a reduced force. While this process has repeated in a similar fashion throughout the modern age, the key difference the US currently faces is that there is not a singular threat but rather a mix of possible state and non-state actors capable of operating in various forms of warfare.

Conclusion: Historical evidence exists of a pattern of downsizing the US military after sustained combat operations. Due to the complex current operating environment, with a variety of possible symmetrical state and asymmetrical non-state threats, a DOD capability to execute a full spectrum of military capabilities must be maintained to combat all threats. If sequestration occurs the US military will not be able to execute to execute all required actions necessary to negate these threats.

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A common cliché is that those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it. While often said, this statement adeptly depicts the preparation, and execution, of military operations post Vietnam War to present day. This snapshot of history provides a common theme that has been repeated for each of the major conflicts executed over the course of these seventy plus years. The Department of Defense, for largely political and economic reasons, has maintained a “right size” force to maintain its strategic capabilities. At the onset of a major war or conflict, the nation’s military has been forced to surge expeditiously in manpower and equipment in order to execute combat operations in the scope and need required. The American war machine has shown its might in supporting these operations in the price of personnel, funding, and other logistical requirements. Upon completion of combat operations, the strain of the drastic increase in military requirements takes its toll on the US in terms of both popular support and financial windfall. This results in a drastic draw down of personnel, the reduction of procuring new equipment, and a delay of new technology being implemented in an attempt to reduce the nation’s debt and reform a war weary American society. The nation’s leaders and its citizens turn its focus from a combat environment to that to a domestic mindset that doesn’t focus nearly as intently on foreign policy.

This series of actions is coupled with the fact that the US continues to train with the previous war in mind. While the nature of war remains the same, an act of violence to compel the enemy to do our will while serving as an extension of policy, the way in which the US has been trained to fight has generally been aligned to the current symmetrical threat.¹ This was a lesson learned the hard way in Vietnam, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and in Afghanistan by engaging in a hybrid warfare of which the training and readiness of the military was ill equipped for its operation spectrum. A reduction of the manpower and budget allocated to the DOD only

further degrades the capability of operational forces. With the loss of personnel, experience, and funding to train towards a multi-faceted approach utilizing lessons learned comes a military that is only able to maintain a strategic and operational capability gauged towards the previous or current threat. This topic will be further discussed with the synopsis being that due to the complex current operating environment, with a variety of possible symmetrical state and asymmetrical non-state threats, a DOD capability to execute a full spectrum of military capabilities must be maintained to combat all threats.

With these issues in mind, the US is at a crossroads that will have implications on the strategic, operational, and tactical capability of the DOD for the foreseeable future. As it currently stands, the DOD is reducing its financial budget by over \$479 million in line with the guidelines of the Budget Control Act of 2011.² The BCA also created the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction and charged it with eliminating an additional \$1.2 trillion in deficit reduction over the next decade. With the Committee not determining these reductions on their own, the budget caps for the next ten years will be automatically be lowered to gain the required amount of cuts. Utilizing the FY13 budget cap of \$546 billion, each year would see a reduction of the budget cap by an additional \$54.6 billion. This cut would be implemented across the full spectrum of the DOD with the only discretion being allotted to the President falling in the possible exemption of personnel numbers being left unchanged. In doing so, the budget for procurement, operational and readiness (O&M), and other funding lines would be cut at a greater rate to offset the exemption. If all accounts were reduced across the DOD funding line, a 10.3 percent reduction would be implemented DOD wide resulting in the national defense budget representing four percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the US. In

comparison, this percentage as a result of sequestration would be much less than the 6.4 percent of the defense budget following World War II.³

While sequestration is still pending a final decision, the service chiefs and politicians have already voiced their opinions in outlining the repercussions that will follow drastic cuts. In reducing funding streams in addition to cuts being executed in response to the 2011 BCA, the DOD will suffer a further hollowing of the force, a reduction in the ability for innovation and readiness, and reduce the ability for the military to maintain a worldwide presence it currently maintains. Utilizing historical references and current problem sets this paper will determine that if sequestration is executed, with all second and third order effects associated in consideration, the US military will not be able to maintain an operational capability to execute all required mission sets and adequately defend the nation to threats without a change in the National Security Strategy.

Before examining the cycle described above, it is important to note how diplomatic actions and policy, as well as the passion or popular support of the populace towards diplomatic actions, impacts the military's readiness and capability. As Clausewitz outlines, the trinity of the people, the government, and the military are variably tied to each other in which all three tenets must be considered in conducting warfare.⁴ Intrinsically all three should be considered in the creation of foreign policy and the means by which it will be executed for the best interests of its citizens. The notion of public sentiment or support is a driving factor that will influence political action that drives the judgments on the size of the DOD and its activities during the time period discussed in this paper. This can be as simple as politicians establishing a de-escalation of combat operations and the subsequent reduction of the force or the reduction of the budget allocated to the DOD to reduce the federal deficit.

However, consideration must always be given to the strategic and operational readiness of the military that enables forces to be generated and operate provides a deterrent to others from committing hostile acts and safeguards its citizens. If this deterrence fails US forces obviously then must have the capability to deploy and defeat this enemy to regain supremacy or a system of balance. The average American would not be able to comprehend how the most powerful nation in the world, with what is seen as holding a plethora of assets, would not be able to execute its required mission sets. This study does not present that case, it instead states that the historical post war cycle involved in demobilizing the force, and reducing the financial it requires, will continue to come at a cost to operational readiness or in blood. In an effort to be proactive vice reactive the US requires an operational capability of its military to be forward deployed, timely, and well trained. The capability of the military, as well as the financial and security status of the US, suffers through the revolving process outlined above. To understand the assessment of the capability of the US military it is important to understand the tenants of the discussion. The assessment of the military's capability can be broken down into four subsections: force structure, modernization, sustainability, and readiness. Force structure is simply the number and type of units allocated to the branches of the military. Modernization being the ability to advance technology, procure new equipment, develop new doctrine, and provide relevant material to the force. Sustainability detailing the ability to support the force in garrison or in protracted or short duration combat operations. Readiness is the preparedness of the force to bring its full ability to bear in terms of personnel and equipment.⁵ Further information will be provided to show that throughout the time period discussed the US military has been limited in these four categories and all signs point to that trend continuing in the near future in catastrophic fashion.

While the focus of this discussion will examine the post Vietnam era, war time periods proceeding that time showed the same trend. After World War II the military was quickly demobilized; with adequate forces remaining in Germany and Japan for occupation and reconstruction, and a large amount of equipment was decommissioned. In June 1945 there were over 12 million US troops serving on active duty. By June 1949 that number had been reduced to 1.6 million.⁶ Also of particular note, a number of landing craft and other naval vessels that would have been beneficial in Korea were scrapped during this scale down along with other equipment. World War II had been financed by increasing taxes, the selling of war bonds, and the issuance of debt amongst other methods that resembled the populace's backing of the war.

An editorial late in 1950 in the paper *Now Hear This!* captured the sentiment that could sum up the US position during all of the major conflicts covered in this paper: "Unfortunately, after every great war, Americans lose all interest in national security...[But] when the shooting starts they want to know why we weren't prepared."⁷ Unfortunately the lessons learned from a lack of a capable military trained to fight against the current threat would be an act that would be repeated over time due to a number of reasons which included economic shortfalls.

The "Forgotten War" in Korea saw income taxes rise to the highest levels in US history to an average of sixty-two percent but the national deficit actually declining by 1952.⁸ However, US personnel numbers were reduced from a June 1953 total of over 3.5 million to just fewer than 2.5 million in June 1961.⁹ While technology and equipment shortfalls were not an issue the equipment and doctrine continued to reflect the strategy the US had executed over the last decade. The DOD obviously could not be aware of the entire nature of the fight it was to engage in Vietnam but an accusation of negligence can be asserted due to US military advisors providing support to the French preceding the deployment of US combat troops in 1965. Similar

to the Korean War, the US would again deal with a military at a down turn in its operational cycle as it entered into a different breed of battle that it was ill prepared to deal with from a strategic stand point.

Vietnam will be discussed at length largely due to the plethora of lessons it serves to highlight the thesis of this paper. The downsizing of the force, continued procurement of equipment that would be used to combat a massive land army of the Soviet Union or other Communist threat, and the lack of doctrine to simultaneously engage in a counter insurgency and conventional fight would plague the conflict. Ultimately a large conscripted force would be heavily relied upon to offset a lack of volunteers. The billions of dollars spent would hamper the US for decades creating a hollow force lacking an ability to maintain a full operational capability without drastic changes as seen in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Executed as part of the larger construct of the Cold War, the Vietnam War would entangle the nation into a protracted conflict that partnered the US with a weak host nation central government, a fledgling ARVN military, and a populace whose allegiance was contested. As a result of an insurgency in the south and the South Vietnamese government and military's inability to serve as the main effort in the conflict, the US increased its aid and the total number of advisors in a creeping fashion that would see gradual escalation of US personnel over the next two decades. The policy of containment, and the fear of the domino theory should Vietnam fall into Communist hands, continued to serve as the mechanism by way the American leadership operated with regards to Vietnam.

Vietnam was not the only the international issue that White House was facing as the 1960s came into picture. The failed Bay of Pigs invasion, the construction of the Berlin Wall,

and the pending Cuban Missile Crisis on 1962 mandated that an American failure in Vietnam was not a course of action. While tumultuous in terms of foreign policy, this operating environment would further increase US public fervor in terms of the approval of military action in Vietnam and the fight against Communism at large. President Kennedy's policy along this line was outlined in his inaugural address during which he vowed "to pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, and oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and success of liberty."¹⁰ The instability of this time period is not that dissimilar to what the US faces today. In substituting Communism with the current global war on terror, parallels in safeguarding US foreign policy and interests can be drawn. In order to do so in Vietnam, the US would have to dramatically increase its footprint in order for the South Vietnamese to be successful. Guerilla tactics by the insurgency in the south, in addition to leadership that was continuing to flounder, forced the US hand to produce additional manpower in Vietnam. This was contrary to claims that President Kennedy desired to redeploy 1,000 troops late in 1963, with the intent for the full redeployment of the force by 1965, with his intent being that South Vietnam would defeat the insurgency itself¹¹. The US stance was the beginning of a current catch phrase of "winning hearts and minds" of the insurgency by way of advisors placed at every level on the South Vietnamese military. To complicate matters, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) formally entered the conflict in 1960 with attacks on Laos while sending over 10,000 troops to attack South Vietnam in 1964. This number would rise to 100,000 by 1965. President Kennedy's assassination, with his direction and view of the conflict gone, ultimately was the beginning of the end of a limited war for the US in Vietnam.

The end of the limited war began when NVA and guerilla attacks in the south not only targeted the South Vietnamese but also US installations and ships stationed in vicinity of the

Gulf of Tonkin. The subsequent Gulf of Tonkin resolution gave Johnson the ability to use combat forces in Southeast Asia, and any other means necessary, without a formal declaration of war. The US retaliated by deploying carrier based fighters to bomb military targets in the North and thus began President Johnson's policy of the escalation of the conflict and an increased US presence in Vietnam.¹² As the conflict in Vietnam was escalating, domestic issues in the US were also boiling over during the mid to late 1960s. The Civil Rights movement, complete with race riots, came to a conclusion in 1964 with the Civil Rights Act and the eventual Voting Rights Act of 1965. A credit crisis overcame the nation in 1966 as the first post war financial crisis hit the US. The Federal Reserve raised interest rates due to the risk of inflation overcoming the financial system. The result was a US economy that limited individual borrowing and was reeling from the post-war booms of World War II and Korea. A developing and chaotic foreign policy was coupled with public unrest and disenfranchisement that would ultimately influence political action in the late 1970s and early 1980s. These issues were coupled with the increased troop strengths in Vietnam leading up to the Tet Offensive in 1968. Both the increased personnel numbers, despite the beginning of the manpower drawdown later that year, and Tet further encapsulated the nation in a war that many Americans were tired of already and not understanding of its reasoning. It was at this time that stability operations had been transformed in the south due to the creation, and successful operation of, the Civilian Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program. As seen in later wars, while successful, this program came too late in the conflict and other problems had increased US frustrations.

Troop strengths in Vietnam rose to over 500,000 by 1968, and despite an active duty force that by the end of 1968 had grown from 2.2 million to 3.4 million in a year's time, the

number of conscripted forces reached an all time high despite the pending draw down¹³. As we have seen recently in fighting a counter insurgency, the process of staging ten one year wars was in place in Vietnam well before Operation Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. Yet another lesson learned the hard way multiple times since. Anti-war sentiment, race riots, and the financial instability further flamed the movement against the war and public support drove political action. It was around this time that the US began the withdrawal of its troops from Vietnam with utilizing the policy of “Vietnamization” or the increased training, equipping, and expansion of the Vietnamese army.¹⁴ The last American personnel departed Vietnam on 29 April 1975, the day before Saigon fell and years after combat troops had redeployed. The outcome was over \$111 billion spent, over 58,000 US troops killed, 300,000 wounded in action, 830,000 troops suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), doubts on the ability of air power to win battles as well as military doctrine and tactics raised, and military leaders pointing fingers at Congress for what was determined to be questionable support and lack of understanding for the goal of the conflict.¹⁵

As mentioned the lessons from Vietnam are vast and the repercussions had a lasting effect on the military for over a decade. As seen in the previous case studies, draw downs are always conducted with the previous war in mind and not with the future conflicts. Upon completion of a successful campaign, leaders and planners tend to move in the direction of the last war with the relevance of previous conflict in mind and in an attempt to do so with a better and with a smaller force. This was the case after Vietnam with the most drastic of decisions made in 1973 by President Nixon residing in the shift back to an all volunteer force after the war’s end as he had called for while serving as the Vice President years prior. In doing so, he called for “a highly trained, professional army”¹⁶ and resolved to do so by increasing the military

wage scale. If not to rebuild the armed forces, he eliminated the draft to reduce the anti-war protests that had been rampant during his first term. Disapproved by most politicians and the DOD, largely due to the notion that it would create a less qualified force that would be lacking in ethnic and social diversity, the establishment of an all volunteer force aided in the recruitment of more qualified troops by the mid 1980s and beyond.¹⁷ However, the early process of training an all volunteer force would be a challenge at its onset.

Many of the leaders from recent years felt this struggle first hand. General Jones, the Marines Corps 32nd Commandant, stated "I had Marines standing before me saying, 'Well, I'm here because the judge said either I go to the Marines or I got to jail for grand theft auto.' It was exhausting."¹⁸ In 1980 only 50 percent of Army recruits had even a high school education, and 40 percent were yanked from regular duty for disciplinary problems or unsuitability before completing their first enlistment. This year marked the low water mark for the all volunteer force as improvements in pay and benefits saw a drastic increase in the quality of volunteer in a trend that would continue. The cost of these benefits was not without penalty. A General Accounting Office report estimated that the cost of the all volunteer force was \$18 billion annually more than a same size conscripted force would have cost.¹⁹ In the early years of the 1980s the Army grew to 16 divisions to deter the massive Soviet army, stretching limited manpower over the skeleton of a larger force structure. By 1980, the effect of those decisions was apparent: Only four of 10 active-duty Army divisions in the United States were rated "ready" to deploy.²⁰

After the withdrawal from Vietnam the DOD focused narrowly on the Soviet Union. The counterinsurgency lessons learned in Vietnam, seen by a majority of personnel as a side-show to conventional combat operations during the conflict, atrophied and were largely expunged from

the training curriculum of conventional forces. “For the Army, counterinsurgency became, as a General put it, a “fad”, something that was “all the rage” in the days of the New Frontiersmen but should now be forgotten in favor of the long-neglected big-war contingency in Europe.”²¹ Defense spending focused on the buildup of equipment while cuts focused on operations and maintenance, training, and other readiness accounts that support military preparedness. The Pentagon had been forced to cut too deep for too long; it faced a manpower crisis with the draft gone; and it had forgotten the lessons of an unconventional war it lost to focus instead on a war it would never actually fight. It allowed the pillars of military capability--force structure, modernization, sustainability, and readiness--to become unbalanced, favoring force structure and modernization at the expense of readiness, operations, and equipment maintenance.

The consequences of the arms race, the 1973 oil crisis, the 1979 energy crisis, rising unemployment and inflation, and the Savings and Loan crisis took its toll on the US economy as the new decade began. Internationally, the Soviets had taken Afghanistan, the U.S. had ineptly failed in an attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran, and the bombing of the Marine Barracks in Lebanon left the US foreign affairs in a state of shock. In terms of military strength the Warsaw Pact nations held a 3 to 1 advantage in the number of tanks, a 4 to 1 advantage in the number of artillery pieces, and a 3 to 1 advantage in terms of tactical missiles over the ground forces of the NATO nations. As a matter of perspective in identifying the widening gap of the two nations, the USSR maintained a standing army of over 4.4 million personnel in comparison to the United States’ 2 million, more than five times the 10,000 tanks the US owned, four times more artillery pieces, and twice the total of warships.²² The massive drawdown from the Vietnam era left an ill equipped force over extended and improperly prepared for the next decade.

During this period the number of missions for US forces severely outnumbered the number of units available. Ten of the Army's sixteen divisions were directly allocated to fight in Europe with five having been stationed on the continent. One Army division was stationed in Korea, two were stationed on the US west coast, and the remaining three were used as a rapid defense force (RDF). The Marine Corps three divisions had a multitude of tasks during this time as well. One division was used on a rotational basis for the RDF and the other two divisions were allocated to the European Commander for defense of the Northern flank or to be used in a European campaign. Pacific Command and the then Atlantic Commands needed, or wanted, a division of Marines to operate in the Pacific, Africa, or South America respectively.²³

The point behind the narrative being is that while the US was still refitting post Vietnam the operational requirements were vast. The federal response reflected this realization and defense spending rose in support of the requirements. Pay and benefits rose, increasing the quality of the individual service member, and procurement was executed in earnest to not only maintain a deterrent to the Communist threat but also to technologically advance the force. During the early 1980s a fleet of new equipment entered the US arsenal which included the M1A1 tank, the F-16 fighter, Light Armored Vehicle (LAV) variants, the AV-8B Harrier aircraft, the AH-1 Cobra, and new Command and Control (C2) systems.²⁴ By the middle of the decade the domestic situation was improving with tax cuts, the revitalization of the auto industry, and falling oil prices bringing the US out of its recession.²⁵ Unfortunately through deficit spending, in no small part to increased military spending, the national debt tripled.

To stem the international tide, the US executed Operation Urgent Fury as it invaded Grenada to interdict after the coup of Prime Minister Eric Gairy by Maurice Bishop, a Fidel

Castro friend and supporter. Having received an arms surplus of Soviet made weapons and Cuban combat engineers to improve and advance the nation's airport, Grenada seemed poised to pose a threat not only to the continental United States but put the students and inhabitants of the island in danger. While ultimately successful, the lack of cooperation, joint planning, and communication between the services forced changes in the DOD. After the failed Iran hostage crisis and near tragedy in Grenada, United States Special Operations Command was founded in January of 1984.²⁶ Further legislature, in the form of the Goldwater Nichols Act, reformed the DOD by increasing the powers of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, streamlining the chain of command, and empowering Unified Combatant Commanders among other devices. These two entities aided in the continued restoration of the DOD.²⁷ A demoralized Soviet military marched out of Afghanistan in 1989, the Berlin Wall came down and Germany unified, and the Cold War was finalizing. The financial toll of Afghanistan, as well as a faltering economy driven to support the arms race against the West and the battle in Southwest Asia, had collapsed the Soviet Union. At the same time, US Army and USMC recruiting goals were not being met and the federal deficit continued to increase. The revitalization of the DOD during the 1980s, in large part due to a substantial fiscal increase to compensate for the post Vietnam period, reshaped the force and prepared it for future conflicts. Unfortunately, politicians sharpened their knives again to cut into the defense budget. Reducing the total end strength by 50,000, the US basked in winning the Cold War and peace breaking out.²⁸ However, this peace would be short lived as a new target emerged.

As the USSR dissolved the United States placed what was received as a new world threat in its crosshairs, Sadaam Hussein and Iraq. Following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi forces, the UN issued a mandate giving Iraq until 15 Jan 1991 to leave Kuwait. When it refused, the US

began a massive bombing campaign two days after the deadline, under the direction of LtGen Horner, USAF who was the unified Air Commander, against the Iraqis. This was followed by a ground assault beginning on 24 February which only lasted 100 hours before Coalition forces had achieved victory despite holding a statistical disadvantage of personnel and equipment available at the onset of the engagement. The takeaways from the Gulf War were the use of unified commanders, the engagement of strategic bombings on key Iraqi infrastructure, and that despite the positioning of US forces abroad it still took the US six months of preparation for the ground attack. The most salient point in the success of the Gulf War was that the US fought a conventional enemy using an equipment base and a force structure developed from the Cold War era. While seen as a success, it ultimately provided a disservice to the DOD as further training and doctrine reflected continued to utilize this model.

After winning the Cold War and the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the U.S. military was facing its second drawdown since the end of the Vietnam era. The United States was once again dealing with a recession with a national debt that had grown from \$900 billion to \$2.8 trillion during President Reagan's tenure, largely due to the defense buildup and tax cuts. Americans, especially elected officials, could not rationalize a robust military being in place. The Clinton administration subsequently reduced the Cold War military by roughly one-third. DOD leadership arguably fell into the trap, once again, of wanting to refight the last war. It focused on honing the high-intensity maneuver warfare that thrashed Iraqi forces in 1991. In the meantime, President Clinton tasked the military with peacemaking, nation-building, and stability operations in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, as well as limited air wars in Kosovo and the Iraqi no-fly zones. Those missions made the armed services more deployable and expeditionary, but after each operation, military planners largely forgot the lessons learned, preferring to focus on high-

intensity conventional operations rather than operations other than war. At was at this time, and through the remainder of the decade, that leaders began the discussion of the state of readiness of the DOD once again.

The ideal of the US military going “hollow” was prevalent post the Vietnam war as previously discussed. In 1994, political leaders such as Senator John McCain raised this concern again in that the size of the nation’s military was not equal to the task of providing for the United States’ security needs abroad. These same leaders recognized that the size and scope of the military that was used in Desert Storm could not be carbon copied for future conflicts in an uncertain world. With this in mind, further consternation was caused when the Clinton White House had determined that fewer forces were needed to accomplish the mission. In 1992 the DOD determined it would need 15 active duty ground divisions as well as 26 Air Force Fighter Wings. A year later, under a new administration, that number was changed to 13 active duty ground divisions and 20 Air Force fighter wings.²⁹ Both the foreign landscape and the political construct had changed significantly for the worse with the result being fewer forces readily available for security and contingency operations. The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) of 1997 outlined that the military had to maintain the capability to engage in two wars simultaneously, execute peace keeping operations, and engage against asymmetric threats all with the same force. Asymmetric threats were deemed the primary threat against the US with the use of chemical and biological weapons, terrorism, and unconventional warfare being utilized against the nation. “Our opponents of the future, be they nation-states, substate, or transnational actors, lacking resources to confront allied forces on the battlefields, will seek our Achilles’ heels using unconventional ways to attack our vulnerabilities”.³⁰ Executing these mission sets and engaging an often unidentifiable enemy was a daunting task in itself. Fulfilling a national

military strategy without the necessary forces and fiscal appropriation required continued to atrophy a military that was doing more with less. As such, each service continued to identify means to prepare their troops for modern day warfare.³¹ These forces once again focused on training and equipping the individual service member with this concept reflected in the Commandant of the Marine Corps vision for the 21st Century Marine.

In April 1998 General Charles Krulak, the 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, laid out his vision for the Corps in his *Leatherneck* article “Building a Corps for the 21st Century, A National Force-In-Readiness”. In it, he outlined what he determined to be the battlefield for the next century.

“The 21st Century battlefield will be vastly different than those we faced during the Cold War. The battlefield will move from open, rural terrain to crowded third world urban slums, where our Marines will face chaotic, multidimensional and often highly lethal combat...It will be an asymmetrical battlefield...In one moment in time, our Marines be will feeding and clothing displaced refugees and providing humanitarian assistance. In the next moment, the will be holding two warring tribes apart, conducting peacekeeping operations, and finally, they will be fighting in lethal mid-intensity battle, all on the same, all within three city blocks. We call this the “three-block war.”³²

General Krulak further insightfully detailed the challenges of the next generation of warfare and the transformation that Marine Corps would execute in order to prepare its force. Better individual equipment and training for every Marine that emphasizes leadership at the lowest level in addition to operational and cultural awareness. Unfortunately, a majority of the technical advances outlined in his vision never came to fruition. The Advanced Amphibious

Assault Vehicle program (AAAV), designed to replace an aging Amphibious Assault Vehicle that is critical for ship to shore operations, was cut primarily due to the costs associated. The Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), first proposed in the late 1990s to serve as the singular short takeoff and vertical landing (STOVL) aircraft for the Marine Corps and also vital to carrier based amphibious operations, is still being outfitted to the Corps today albeit at a reduced quantity as a cost cutting measure. While advances were made to upgrade prior to the turn of the century, it still remains to be seen how the neglect of two critical equipment programs will hamper the Marine Corps in its ability to execute a core capability of amphibious assault and operational maneuver from the sea.³³ This problem was not a singular Marine Corps problem as the shift away from procurement of new equipment left all of the services putting a band aid on aviation, mobility, and fire support equipment. As was usually the case, the military was doing more with less personnel and equipment as would be ideally available at the turn of the century.

Echoing General Krulak's vision, the 21st Century would pose a serious challenge to the US. Instability would come in the face of state and non-state actors as the continued rise of Al Qaeda and other radical groups would pose a foreign and domestic test to the US. Based largely on an unchecked balance against a predominantly faceless and hidden foe, no repercussion of the inability to deter this threat would loom larger than the Al Qaeda attack on 9/11. Al Qaeda was not a new hazard but a lack of intelligence and forward engagement preceding 9/11, by government and military agencies and organizations, was not able to identify the threat to prevent an attack while planners scrambled after to formulate a plan. The US was able to respond quickly however and began the protracted, largely economy of force mission in Afghanistan, only months after the 9/11 attack. Sensing a connection between Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups and Iraq, as well as the threat of possible nuclear arms and instability within the region,

the US invaded Iraq in 2003 to battle with Sadaam Hussein's forces again for the second time in just over a decade.

After initial success utilizing superior technology and firepower in both fronts, the US once again found itself guilty of attempting to fight the last war. Sectarian violence swept through Iraq and the insurgency in both Iraq and Afghanistan overwhelmed the US. Having forgotten the counter insurgency lessons learned from Vietnam, but reproducing the bombing campaigns and conventional doctrine displayed during that time, the US struggled for an answer in both theaters. While the services argued they had the manpower to address both fronts but further funding was required for maintenance, operations, and procurement. The Marine Corps continued to reallocate manpower from noncombat jobs to war fighting positions.³⁴ Despite the services position, the DOD again increased troop strengths to assist in combat operations. It wasn't until the surge in Iraq of 2007, in addition to revised tactics, techniques, and procedures that assisted in the awakening that the tide turned back into the US favor. Afghanistan, having been the supporting effort to Operation Iraqi Freedom, saw a similar surge in 2009 to combat the insurgency plaguing most of southern and eastern Afghanistan. As 2011 closed the majority of US troops had departed Iraq signaling the end of a conflict that costs the US billions of dollars and thousands of lives. As the US prepares to depart Afghanistan in 2014 the end result will not be as clear despite security and control of numerous provinces has been turned over to the Afghans, signaling progress and success in small doses. An inability to rely on a host nation government and to build popular support for the Afghan government has left the coalition in a quandary similar to that of Vietnam. In building Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) capability to provide legitimacy to the face of the Afghan government, while maintaining the security and objectives of the US, our troops continue to tightrope a thin line of executing their

mission with a restrictive operating environment that is marred by a looming drawdown similar to historical examples.

Keeping in line with the historical cycle, the US war machine has taken its toll on the populace and the economy. Sweeping changes are in motion to exacerbate this, specifically an astronomical financial debt. The challenge is to allow the US to maintain its place as the preeminent world power financially, socially, and militarily without decimating its armed forces to a level that will leave it hollow for the next fight during unprecedented times.

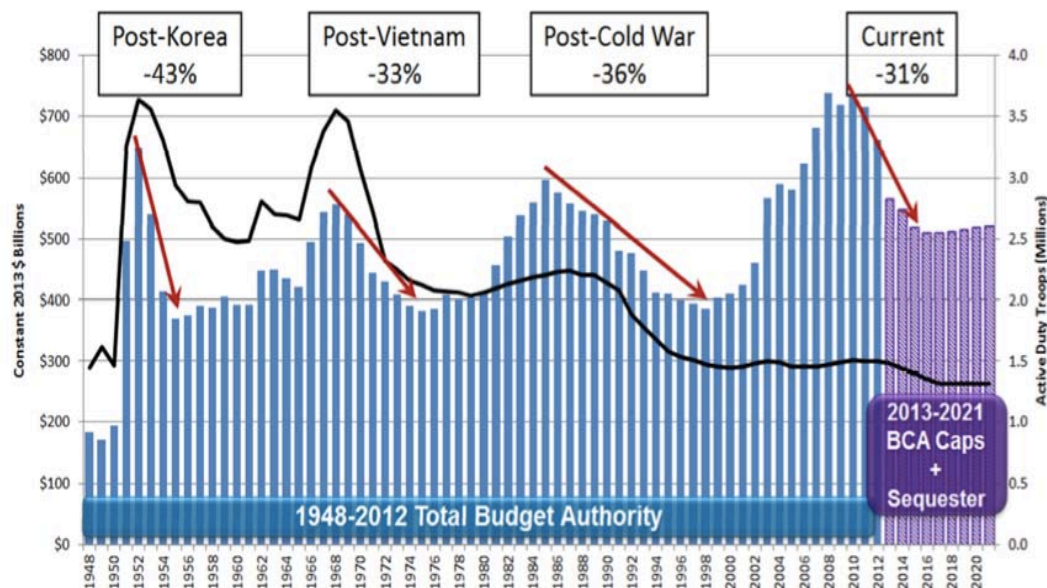


Figure 1: 1948-2012 Department of Defense Total Budget Authority and total numbers of troops
Source: Ezra Klein; "The Sequester's Defense Cuts Aren't That Scary, in One Graph"; *The Washington Post*; November, 2012; <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2012/11/20/the-sequesters-defense-cuts-arent-that-scary-in-one-graph>

Figure 1 highlights the ebbs and flows of the DOD budget since the post World War II timeframe. Although the 2011 Budget control act calls for initially less reductions than that of post Korea or Vietnam, sequestration has the potential to create greater damage than previously seen. Emerging from each period, largely all during the Cold War, the US had one singular

threat in USSR and the possibility of Communist expansion. As the US emerges from Afghanistan that is not the case as the threat remains unknown, creating a greater need to a multifaceted military. To provide the nation with this force comes at a cost at a time when fiscal concerns are at the forefront of concerns. The national debt has never been higher while the price of equipping the military to execute foreign policy is at unforeseen levels. The costs associated with outfitting the individual service member in combat has raised tenfold over the last two decades. Oil prices continue to cause transportation and training costs to rise drastically. Equipment required to fight a modern and decentralized battle with adequate protection for the troops continues to increase in price. Modernizing, training, and equipping today's force that has a global reach is costly but imperative. The responsibilities abroad, greater than they have been in the past, will not shrink in line with the funding allocated or troops available.

These facts were not lost on then Secretary of Defense Panetta when he responded to requests for information by Senators McCain and Graham in November of 2011. In his letters to the Senators he outlined what the ramifications of sequestration would mean to the DOD. He outlined near terms effects as reducing or eliminating major weapons programs such the Joint Strike Fighter, P-8 aircraft, and other ground combat vehicles and ships. As mentioned DOD personnel are currently exempt from the cuts but civilian personnel are not and furloughs would begin immediately. Training would be reduced and severe reductions in construction and weapon procurement would be implemented. Secretary Panetta summarized long term reductions that would lead to the smallest ground force since 1940, a fleet of fewer than 230 ships that would represent the smallest level since 1915, and the smallest tactical fighter force in the history of the Air Force. He summarized the outcomes of sequestration with the fact that

national security objectives needing to be reviewed based on the future force and equipment structure of the DOD as well as its capabilities.³⁵

In concert with the former Secretary of Defense, each Service Chief testified before the House Armed Services Committee in February of this year. Army Chief of Staff General Odierno testified that required training for eighty percent of his force has been curtailed, to include reducing the number of pilots who transited through Army flight school. He anticipates the loss of nearly 100,000 soldiers from the active and reserve ranks by the end of 2014 as he cannot envision how personnel are not a part of the sequestration plan. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Greenert stated that the Navy has delayed the deployment of one carrier group, delayed the overhaul of a second, and postponed the construction of a third. Additionally, an \$8.6 billion shortfall in O&M funds has forced delays to maintenance and training throughout his service. General Welsh, the Air Force Chief of Staff, will see his 180,000 civilian workforce face furloughs that will come at a cost of 31.5 million man hours for a service dependent upon these cadre of workers. Additionally, the Air Force will cut its weapons procurement by nearly thirty percent as a result of sequestration. General Amos, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, estimated that 50 percent of his tactical units will not meet the minimum acceptable readiness levels for combat deployments by the end of the year. These comments are simply a short summary of the issues the services will face will attempting to complete their mission essential tasks and prepare for deployment in support of the National Defense Strategy.³⁶

The further reduction of the force, to levels for the Army and Marine Corps that have not seen since after the Vietnam War era, would continue to burden the all volunteer force that is weary from continuously conducting combat operations since 2001. Complicated by an

operational tempo that has slowed somewhat, but not stopped, the fatigue found now amongst the ranks would only be compounded by a further reduction. In addition to maintaining a presence in Afghanistan, the US military continues to conduct foreign policy via security cooperation and foreign internal defense (FID) throughout the world in an effort to prevent instability in critical regions and to enable host nation countries to solve their own problems before they reach a critical point requiring US or coalition involvement. A nation raises and maintains a military to deter others from threatening its sovereignty and way of life and then mobilizing the armed forces as required when threatened³⁷. With increased reductions this practice will become a larger task to execute with the operational results not to the level they should be and largely have previously been.

“The looming cuts inevitably force decisions on the scope and future of the American military. If, say, the Pentagon saves \$7 billion over a decade by reducing the number of aircraft carriers to 10 from 11, would there be sufficient forces in the Pacific to counter an increasingly bold China? If the Pentagon saves nearly \$150 billion in the next 10 years by shrinking the Army to, say, 483,000 troops from 570,000, would America be prepared for a grinding, lengthy ground war in Asia?”³⁸

Deterrence in this regard would be lacking in a similar fashion to the late 1970s when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and hostages were taken in Iran. Based on the current state of international affairs this could become a worldwide epidemic that influences both state and non-state actors.

The climate of the world makes the challenge of executing US foreign policy difficult even if an abundance of resources was available. The US military is tasked to train and equip forces to deploy to Afghanistan, provide embassy relief in nations like Libya, and execute FID in

third world nations while also remaining proficient in warfare that would rivaled by nations such as Iran, China, and North Korea. Recent events such as the Arab Spring (which continued into the Arab year), foreign terrorist organization operations in Mali, Iran and North Korea nuclear arms testing, the rise of cyber threats, and the continuance of armed radical non-state actors beleaguer the point that the US does not know who the next enemy is or where the battlefield will be. The US needs to retain the ability to maintain a flexible response apportioned to the threat. As Frank Hoffman points out, it needs to be able to serve as a utility infielder.³⁹ In this role the US would not remain solely focused on the counter-insurgency fight of the last decade or the high intensity conventional warfare that had predated it in the last century. The manning, training and equipping of the force would be sufficient enough to maintain a middle weight capability for all services and enable them to internally surge to meet a large scale symmetrical or even hybrid threat or to deploy a right size force to conduct low intensity or unconventional warfare operations.

If sequestration is executed in the manner forecasted the US will face budget cuts in an unprecedented fashion. In doing so, the National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Military Strategy (NMS) will not be viable in their current form. The 2011 NMS utilizes the NSS and the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) to establish four key National Military Objectives: counter violent extremism, deter and defeat aggression, strengthen international and regional security, and shape the current force.⁴⁰ Sequestration will inhibit the DOD's capability to execute each of these objectives to the degree necessary. In limiting the funding and resources available, the US military will not be able to project power required to deter and defeat aggression. A repercussion of the funding cuts is the realization that a Navy carrier will not be positioned in the Gulf by the end of this year and another one will be delayed in entering the Pacific as part of the pivot to that

region. Other possible results of the funding cuts in the future could lie in the redeployment of US troops that are foreign bases in Europe and Asia, delaying the response time of US troops in mass quantities. Unit Deployment Program (UDP) missions could cease resulting in less bilateral and multinational exercises that assist in coordination and capacity building with foreign nations thus lessening the international and regional security they provide. That would be in addition to the vast reduction in direct foreign aid that the DOD would be able to provide to partner nations. Less resilient and capable partners throughout the world, limited by US funding and a lack of Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) interaction with the US, would not only destabilize regions but possibly incur future US military action on a larger scale.

In addition to limiting the influencing the capabilities of the DOD on foreign soil, if sequestration is implemented it will have an impact of the capabilities of the National Guard to conduct operations domestically. As part of the sequester, unpaid furloughs would hamper the civilian work force that executes daily functions of the National Guard and would result in maintenance backlogs, limit critical training, and reduce other activities that Governors and first responders rely on in domestic issues. These actions include chemical, biological, and nuclear response, maintenance of civil authority, movement of resources and personnel, and search and rescue operations.⁴¹ If the Army is forced to reduce troop strengths as previously mentioned by General Odierno these shortfalls would be further exacerbated and reduce the capabilities available domestically.

In maintaining a steady state military force that builds off conventional and counter-insurgency lessons learned from the past two decades of fighting, the US is better poised to counter future threats and execute the NMS as currently described. By maintaining the current

force structure with all the benefits of service, both during and after active service, the DOD will maintain a professional fighting force with its members espousing the qualities that the military has been known to possess. Keeping the right size force but reducing health care, retirement opportunities, and wage scales will force the services to accept people who have to be there rather than want to similar to the initial years of the post Vietnam era. This in turn further decreases military capability and readiness and limits the military's ability to maintain the security of the nation.

In discussing the generational cycle of increasing the size of the US military for combat operations and subsequently demobilizing the force and reducing its funding the parallels can be drawn to the current fiscal decision the DOD is facing today. As seen in every major conflict since World War II, the US military is negatively affected by this process and a secondary effect is the nation is left further in debt and immediately unprepared for the next war. If the DOD faces additional cuts in the upcoming years it will be devastated at an unprecedented level largely due to the nature of the world today. The budget deficit has never been larger but the world has never been more chaotic and in need of properly trained and equipped service members who are world-wide deployable and able to respond to a litany of problems. Further cuts to manpower, procurement, and readiness would limit the ability of the military to engage in more than one contest as well as the ability for these forces to engage in a protracted engagement from an execution or sustainment standpoint. Financial restrictions would prevent further procurement that would limit innovation and replace equipment that is either outdated or too heavy for all operating environments. By reducing the force the strain on the individual service member will become even worse and they will be driven away from serving, creating an experience and leadership gap. A deduction of the benefits a service member receives would

drive away the best of candidates and welcome those who have no other options. In short, the US the US military will not be operationally ready to respond and execute all required mission sets and adequately defend the nation to threats. As pointed out in this paper, if these cuts are undertaken history will not only be repeating itself, a new and even worse chapter will be written.

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